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Nomads of the Battlefield:  
Ranger Companies in the Korean War, 1950-1951

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
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fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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B.S., Canisius College, 1976

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
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NOMADS OF THE BATTLEFIELD: RANGER COMPANIES IN THE KOREAN WAR,  
1950-1951, BY MAJOR JOHN G. PROVOST, USA, 92 pages.

This study analyzes the creation, use, and subsequent inactivation of the U.S. Army Ranger Companies during the Korean conflict from October of 1950 to August of 1951. The records and correspondence of the Office of the Chief of Staff for Operations, U.S. Army and historical after action reports of the 8th U.S. Army in Korea provide the materials to analyze the Rangers.

The study asks were the organization and methods of employment of the Ranger Companies conducive to their effective use. The study also seeks to answer the questions: 1) How were the ranger companies employed in Korea? 2) What impact did they have in the conflict and upon the U.S. Army? 3) Would they have been more effective under a different organization?

Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins ordered the creation of the Ranger Companies of the Korean conflict. He wished to create "Marauder" units to operate behind enemy lines, attacking their tank parks and assembly areas. This mission was developed as a response to the enemy's assault infiltration tactics launched against American rear areas during the early part of the Korean conflict. The first Ranger company to serve in Korea was a Provisional Unit formed in October of 1950, to test Collins' concept. This unit was inactivated upon arrival of the 5th Ranger Company in Korea in February of 1951. Along with the 5th, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 8th Ranger Companies served in Korea beginning in December of 1950. However, by June of the following year the Department of the Army decided to inactivate these units and accomplished this by 1 August 1951.

Throughout the period of their existence the Ranger Companies acquitted themselves well as a fighting force, but were usually employed as just another company or as a sort of fire brigade for the division commander rather than in the raiding force role initially envisioned. Some of the problems in the employment of the Ranger Companies were the absence of sound intelligence on enemy rear areas and the lack of critical targets behind the front lines of the North Koreans and Chinese. The nature of the conflict and the subsequent concern to limit U.S. casualties all contributed to their eventual inactivation. Lack of intelligence on the enemy, and insertion/extraction assets at divisional level precluded their effective use as a deep raiding force.

The study concludes that although the Army Staff and major commands saw no need for Ranger units, they did see a need for ranger trained personnel. This resulted in the formation of the Ranger School concurrently with the inactivation of the Ranger Companies.

*John G. Provost, USA* JIS

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

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The study asks were the organization and methods of employment of the Ranger Companies conducive to their effective use. The study also seeks to answer the questions: 1) How were the ranger companies employed in Korea? 2) What impact did they have in the conflict and upon the U.S. Army? 3) Would they have been more effective under a different organization?

Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins ordered the creation of the Ranger Companies of the Korean conflict. He wished to create "Marauder" units to operate behind enemy lines, attacking their tank parks and assembly areas. This mission was developed as a response to the enemy's assault infiltration tactics launched against American rear areas during the early part of the Korean conflict. The first Ranger company to serve in Korea was a Provisional Unit formed in October of 1950, to test Collins' concept. This unit was inactivated upon arrival of the 5th Ranger Company in Korea in February of 1951. Along with the 5th, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 8th Ranger Companies served in Korea beginning in December of 1950. However, by June of the following year the Department of the Army decided to inactivate these units and accomplished this by 1 August 1951.

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contributed to their eventual inactivation. Lack of intelligence on the enemy, and insertion/extraction assets at divisional level precluded their effective use as a deep raiding force.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION:

#### THE CONCEPT FOR RANGERS IN KOREA IS BORN

The purpose of this work is to analyze the employment of U.S. Army Ranger companies during the Korean War. These Ranger companies were the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th Ranger Infantry Companies, (Airborne), and the 8213th provisional 8th Army Ranger Company. The majority of the companies in Korea were active for less than a year, between December of 1950 and August of 1951. This paper will investigate if the Rangers were used as intended and if the reasons for their inactivation were justified.

With Light Infantry Divisions and a Ranger Regiment currently part of the Army force structure, this study can provide a better understanding of the problems of employing Rangers and possibly a better understanding of the use and capabilities of light infantry. It also may suggest the difficulties of the Army in fielding and maintaining elite or specialized units.

The use and effectiveness of Ranger units has, and continues to be, debated throughout the American military. Prior to 1974, we created Ranger units to duplicate tactics used by our adversaries or our allies, or for specialized missions. The Ranger companies activated during the Korean War were to duplicate an enemy capability to infiltrate front lines and strike rear support areas. By the time the companies were trained and ready, the circumstances

had changed. After the Rangers arrived in the theater of operations, they sought missions to justify their existence. However inadvertently, this contributed to their misuse. The Ranger companies in the Korean conflict present a case study of units being activated and deployed without a full understanding of their mission and of the assets necessary to accomplish that mission.

On the morning of 25 June 1950, seven North Korean infantry divisions, a tank brigade, and supporting troops launched a surprise attack across the 38th parallel against the forces of the Republic of South Korea and their U.S. advisors. By June 30th the U.S. committed ground forces against the North Korean invasion. During the months of July and August, the U.S. and South Koreans fought a series of delaying actions to stop the North Korean attack. (1)

During fact-finding trips to Korea in July and August of 1950, General J. Lawton Collins, then Chief of Staff of the Army, visited with General MacArthur, the Far East Commander, and with Generals Walton H. Walker and William F. Dean, the Commanders of the Eighth Army and 24th Division, respectively. (2) While no documented evidence on the subject of these talks has been found, it is reasonable to deduce that a discussion occurred of North Korean tactics and their effect on the Eighth Army. What made these tactics so alarming was the apparent ease with which the North Koreans infiltrated American defenses and attacked rear support units. These tactics were basic to the Communist effort which pushed the American and South Korean Forces down the Korean peninsula to a congested defensive area known as the Pusan perimeter.

In August of 1950 as the North Koreans prepared to launch their final offensive against the Pusan perimeter, General Collins sent a memorandum to his G-3 Operations Officer, MG Charles L. Bolte (Appendix A). In this memorandum Collins outlined his initial concept for what he called "Marauder Companies." (3)

The Chief of Staff argued that "One of the major lessons to be learned from the Korean fighting appears to be the fact that the North Koreans have made very successful use of small groups, trained, armed and equipped for the specific purpose of infiltrating our lines and attacking command posts and artillery positions." (4) Collins explained how the Germans during World War II had developed similar units. He believed that the results achieved by these units warranted the development of similar formations in the American Army. (5)

Collins' term, "Marauder Companies" is an apparent reference to Merrill's Marauders, who operated as a conventional deep-penetration unit behind Japanese lines in Burma during World War II. Since Collins served in the Pacific theater, he knew about this unit and its method of operation. The Marauders operated in a theater characterized by thick jungle and rugged terrain. The war in the China-Burma-India theater had no front lines, a situation that lent itself to exploitation by light units that could operate over extended distances supported by aerial resupply. The German unit to which Collins referred may have been the Brandenburg Regiment or the special commando organization formed by Otto Skorzeny in 1943 that

infiltrated allied lines in attempts to disrupt rear areas. Both units either parachuted behind or infiltrated through the allied front lines in small groups and attacked or disrupted command and logistical assets in the rear areas. Some of the personnel in these units disguised themselves as American or allied troops to avoid detection.(6)

Having served in the Pacific as a division commander and as a Corps commander in Europe during World War II, Collins was probably familiar with both of these organizations. Although not directly mentioned in his memorandum, it is likely that he also knew of the Ranger Battalions of World War II. These battalions were organized along the lines of the British Commandos. Like the Commandos, the Rangers were formed to conduct raids behind enemy lines and serve as specialized assault troops. Consisting of volunteers from throughout the Army, these battalions were not capable of engaging in sustained combat operations. However, by the time the Rangers deployed, World War II had passed the stage where the U.S. needed harassment raids upon the enemy. Consequently, the Army used Rangers to accomplish a variety of missions, not necessarily consistent with the original concept for their employment. In the Pacific, MacArthur used the 6th Ranger Battalion to rescue prisoners at Cabanatuan in the Philippines in 1945. In Europe, the Ranger Battalions supported major amphibious invasions by the Allies. In this role they participated in the invasions of North Africa and Italy. (7)

In North Africa, in November 1942 Rangers supported the initial landings by neutralizing coastal defenses and capturing docks and were used with some effect during the drive to Tunisia the following

spring. In Italy the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Ranger Battalions were decimated trying to infiltrate the German lines at Anzio in January-February 1944. The 2nd Ranger Battalion, with whom General Collins would have probably been most familiar, participated in the invasion of France at Normandy in June 1944. At Normandy, the 2nd Ranger Battalion seized Pointe de Hoc to neutralize a battery of 155mm guns that threatened the flank of General Collins' VII Corps. Like previous operations during this war, the Rangers siezed and held the area until relieved by supporting forces. (8)

In World War II the main use of Rangers was as the spearhead for main attacks by conventional forces. If used selectively, and with sufficient time for the acquisition and training of replacements between operations, they were effective in this role as specialized assault troops. The history of the use of Rangers in WW II, in ways inconsistent with their operational design, did not bode well for the activation and employment of Ranger companies in Korea. (9)

In his memorandum of August 1950 Collins went on to give specific guidance to activate experimental "marauder" companies. As Collins saw it, this was to lead ultimately to the formation of companies for each division in the Army. Then, after training and Korean war experience, Collins foresaw the possible formation of companies for each regiment in the Army. Specifically the mission of the marauders would be to infiltrate enemy lines to attack command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communications centers and facilities. Each company would consist of three platoons with three

ten-man squads. The men would all be volunteers with high intelligence ratings, would receive twenty percent extra pay and be trained to handle demolitions. (10)

The memorandum from Collins went on to say that each soldier should be equipped with a light automatic weapon, and each squad should have either a 60mm mortar or a bazooka, and that for survival and rapid movement each man in the squad should carry two rounds for these weapons. The company itself was not to exceed 100 men and the administrative and supply echelons kept to the bare minimum. Collins' idea was that each man should be able to cook his own meal and carry a light shelter half or sleeping bag on his back. His idea for training was to establish a training section at the Infantry School with an "outstanding young brigadier or colonel to be placed in charge of the project." He also indicated that he wanted the project expedited so that these companies could be tested in Korea. (11)

On 7 September 1950 an action memorandum from G-3 of the Army to HQ, Army Field Forces directed the expeditious formation of a training section to develop and test the organization, equipment, doctrine, tactics, techniques and training of the Ranger companies. (12)

The memorandum was verbatim from the original Collins' directive to his G-3. This memorandum also returned without action a proposal submitted to the G-3 by Army Field Forces for approval of Special Reconnaissance Detachments. The G-3 judged that the same basic unit could fill both the reconnaissance and marauder roles. This action inadvertently added a mission beyond the scope originally

envisioned for the Rangers. The memorandum set a suspense date of 5 October for an outline plan of implementation, but told Army Field Forces not to delay implementation of the project pending approval of plans. (13)

Attached to this memorandum were minutes of a conference on the subject of marauder companies hosted by the Army G-3 on 7 September 1950. Representatives from Army Field Forces, the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of the Army G-1, G-2, G-4, G-3 Operations, and G-3 Training attended this conference. The purpose of the conference was to discuss implementation of the Chief of Staff's guidance. (14)

At this conference, G-3 Operations resolved two matters: they decided to provide full companies to the divisions in Korea rather than cadres. In addition, they decided that the Reconnaissance Company Table of Organization should not be submitted in light of the activation of the Ranger Companies. Discussion on the size of the organization reached no definite conclusions, except to agree that the total organization would not exceed 150 personnel. (15)

The Army planned to activate the first company by 1 October 1950. The personnel were to be drawn from the 82nd Airborne Division since these soldiers already had basic and airborne training. The men were to be volunteers and have an army aptitude test score of at least 90, which would eliminate those with the lowest aptitude. The rank structure required was to be similar to that of an infantry rifle company. (16)

Initially, Army Field Forces established a training base at Fort Benning, Georgia, to organize, train and equip one company for combat in Korea. The facilities were then to be expanded to train a maximum of three companies with a ten percent overstrength for each company. The tentative training period for the first company was six weeks. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) offered to support the project initially with a training program, instruction, and temporary provision of equipment. (17)

During the 7 September conference, Colonel Walter E. Kraus, Chief, Unit Section, Organizational Branch, G-3 Operations, Department of the Army made the decision for the designation of "Ranger" for the units rather haphazardly.. To quote Colonel Kraus, "Unless there is some real objection to the name Ranger, this should be adopted." (18) Evidently there was none, so the companies became "Rangers". While this may appear to be little more than a humorous aside, it suggests that little thought was given to try to correlate the operational design of these companies with the experiences of their WW II predecessors. In a telephonic interview conducted for this thesis, Colonel Kraus related that indeed little thought had been given to the designation "Ranger." However, the conferees in 1950 viewed the units as "resurrections" of the WW II Rangers. This designation also allowed the lineage and honors of the WW II Rangers to be carried forward by the Korean War Ranger Companies. (19)



The G-3 decided to provide the Ranger companies with standard equipment so as not to delay activation of units. Later, if necessary, specialized equipment would be procured. The only way seen to give personnel extra pay was to make them parachute qualified and enable them to draw "jump" pay. The G-3 recommended that a special military occupational specialty be created to ensure that the intense training given to the members of the Ranger companies would not be lost even after they moved on to other units in the Army. The committee recommended subjects to be incorporated into the curriculum for the training to include material on foreign weapons, field craft, guerrilla operations, and cooperation and coordination with indigenous personnel. (20)

This G-3 conference focused on the short term goal of fielding Ranger companies in Korea as quickly as possible. It made no effort to establish evaluation and review procedures for a long term program. The Army Staff appears to have assumed that the evaluation of these units by the division commanders in Korea would suffice as a fair evaluation. While the conference attendees concentrated on keeping the organization as lean as possible, they did not address how each Ranger company was going to be employed, supported, and controlled while attached to a division.

On 26 September, MG Bolte sent a memorandum to the Headquarters, Army Field Forces, outlining the substance of communications he had received from MacArthur's Far East Command

(FECOM). Bolte had requested comments from the command on possible Ranger unit missions and methods of employment and asked if there were any similar units operating in FECOM. (21)

FECOM informed him that they saw a need for units such as the Ranger companies at the earliest possible date, and on 6 September the U.N. Command in Korea and Japan activated a Special Activities Group to train, control, and provide support for a specialized raiding force. The units that made up this command consisted of a Provisional Raider Company of 203 volunteers from throughout the U.N. command, a volunteer group from the Royal Navy of 12 men and the 41st Royal Marine Commando with 225 men. (22)

The equipment and organization for the U.N. Raider Company was very similar to that proposed for the Ranger Companies. The Raider Company consisted of three rifle platoons of three squads with ten men per squad. The squads were equipped with small arms and a machine gun or 60mm mortar. The company also had a special weapons platoon of 56 men armed with 76mm pack howitzers, 81mm mortars or 60mm mortars. (23)

The Raider Companies received special training in Japan and were used before the Inchon landing to implement a deception plan. They were to be used in the attack on Kimpo airfield, Seoul, on 25 September 1950, but inclement weather cancelled the operation. At the time FECOM sent the information on this force to MG Bolte, the

Raider Company was operating in support of X Corps, performing missions to harrass the enemy and destroying important installations in Seoul. (24)

FECOM also informed MG Bolte that 8th Army had organized what it called a Ranger company but had not yet employed it in Korea. FECOM had South Koreans training in Japan and these soldiers would eventually form the nucleus of guerrilla units to operate in North Korea, initially under FECOM and ultimately under Central Intelligence Agency control. (25) So the effort to create and employ special organizations was already under way in the Far East. It remained to be seen how the Ranger companies forming and training in the United States would fit into this situation.

The officer chosen to head the Ranger project in the United States was Colonel John G. Van Houten. General Collins knew Van Houten from World War II, where Van Houten served as a regimental commander and a assistant division commander in the Ninth Infantry Division in Collins' VII Corps. Van Houten wasted no time in meeting with General Collins and getting started on his command. Van Houten was concerned that the war would be over before the Ranger companies could see any action, and he wanted to get an observer out to FECOM immediately to determine the effectiveness of the provisional 8th Army Ranger Company and to assess how training could be oriented to the conditions in Korea. (26) Unfortunately, for Van Houten, those whose comments would carry the most weight, and have

the greatest effect effect on the future of the Ranger companies would be the Division Commanders of the committed divisions, not his hand-picked observer.

## CHAPTER I ENDNOTES

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## CHAPTER II

### CONCEPT TO REALITY:

#### ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING OF THE RANGERS

"Ranger, soldier specially trained to make surprise attacks on enemy territory. Rangers act in small groups, making rapid attacks and withdrawing." (1)

Through October and November of 1950, the first three Ranger companies trained at Fort Benning. On 15 November the 1st, 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies began their movement overseas. The 1st did not arrive in theater until 1 January of 1951. The 2nd and 4th did not arrive until 15 January. The inordinate amount of time it took to get soldiers to Korea was caused by the distance to Korea and by the fact that troop ships transported all soldiers and their equipment.

On 28 November 1951 the first observer from the Ranger Training Center, Major John K. Singlaub, arrived in Tokyo. Singlaub wrote to Van Houten explaining his initial impressions and suggesting additional training that he thought the Rangers needed. Having talked to officers from X Corps, then advancing in North Korea, he believed that the Ranger units would benefit from the cold weather and mountain training course at Fort Carson, Colorado. (2) The Ranger Training Command adopted this suggestion. Unfortunately, this extended the training cycle for following Ranger companies by three to four weeks.

The Ranger companies were organized under Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) No. 7-87, dated 17 October 1950. Due to the urgency that General Collins attached to the project, and the fact that companies were being fielded as test units, the TOE was austere. This was to ensure that the units were not saddled with a heavy administrative tail and to speed the activation process.

As General Collins had specified, the mission for the Ranger companies, as stated in the TOE, was "To infiltrate through enemy lines and attack command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communications centers and facilities." The Rangers were assigned to the Infantry Division, under TOE 7M. (3) The Rangers were to be capable of infiltrating enemy lines and destroying his installations. They were trained to repel enemy assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack, to operate in all types of terrain and climate, to conduct intelligence operations, to conduct assaults by parachute, glider, or assault aircraft, and with augmentation, the company was to be capable of independent operations for short periods of time. If without its own augmentation Ranger companies must be attached to another unit for administration, mess, supply, and organizational maintenance. (4) The mission capabilities of this TOE seem to have made the Rangers capable of carrying out all the standard infantry missions and then some. This general capability statement did nothing to explain how to employ Rangers appropriately to the divisions to which the Rangers were attached.



The Ranger Company was organized with three rifle platoons and a company headquarters. The full strength of the company under wartime conditions was 105 personnel. The company headquarters had six personnel, the platoon headquarters three, with three ten-man squads. The company headquarters consisted of the company commander, an executive officer, a first sergeant, communications chief, medical aidman, and a messenger. Later, as a result of combat operations in Korea, the Ranger Training Command made requests to augment the company headquarters with additional radio men and messengers. The rifle platoon headquarters consisted of a platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and a messenger. Each squad had a squad leader, assistant squad leader, three automatic rifleman and five rifleman. (5)

The company was equipped with

- 46 - .30 caliber carbine M2
- 3 - .30 caliber Browning machine gun M1919A6
- 36 - .45 caliber submachinegun M3A1
- 18 - grenade launchers .30 caliber, M7A1
- 9 - 3.5 inch rocket launchers
- 9 - 60mm mortars, M5
- 3 - 57mm rifle M18
- 18 - .30 caliber Browning, M1918A2
- 37 - U.S. .30 caliber, M1 rifles

for transportation;

- 2 - 1/4 ton trucks
- 1 - 2 1/2 ton truck. (6)

and for communications;

- 1 - AN/GRC-9
- 20 - AN/PRC-6
- 2 - AN/PRC-10
- 1 - AN/TRC-7 for air ground communications
- 2 - land line field telephones. (7)

Of the weapons of the Ranger companies, the M-2 carbine had a fifteen or thirty round magazine, was capable of firing in both the semi-automatic and automatic mode and had an effective range of 150 meters. It did not, however, fire the same round as the M-1 rifle. The Browning .30 caliber machinegun was a tripod-mounted, air cooled weapon with an effective range of less than 1500 meters. The .45 caliber submachinegun, commonly called the "grease gun", had a 30 round magazine and an effective range of less than 100 meters. The 3.5 inch rocket launchers had a published effective range of several hundred meters, but the firer had to move within 70 meters to get an effective kill on a medium tank. The 57mm recoilless rifle fired an anti-tank round to a range of over 4000 meters and was very effective in destroying enemy bunkers. The 60mm mortar was the only indirect fire asset organic to the company and had an effective range of 1990 meters. Finally, every squad had one or two Browning Automatic Rifles. These were usually the weapons upon which maneuver elements built their most effective base of supporting fires. It is important to note that all these weapon systems were not as effective during periods of limited visibility or adverse weather. The company had no night vision devices, such as infrared sights, for their main weapon systems. (8) Since periods of adverse

visibility were the best times for patrolling, the Rangers were routinely placed at a disadvantage in the effectiveness of their weapons.

The weapons of the Ranger companies were generally effective at ranges of less than 500 yards. The company, because of its high density of automatic weapons in lieu of semi-automatic weapons (such as the M-1 Garand), had the capability to generate a high volume of fire power during an engagement, but the high volume of fire put a strain on resupply operations during periods of sustained combat. In contrast, the normal infantry rifle company had twice as many personnel. However, they were equipped with the M-1, and received support from an established logistical system. (9) Consequently, the normal infantry company's problems of resupply for sustained operations was not nearly so great as the Ranger's.

The Ranger's communications equipment was strong in internal company communications, but weak in communications to division. The AN/GRC-9 weighed fifty-six pounds and was the sole means by which the company could talk directly to Division. The two AN/GRC-10 radios had a five mile range and enabled the company to talk to the Battalion or Regiment to which it was attached. The majority of these radios required line-of-sight to operate at their best. In Korea the terrain made line-of-sight operations difficult. The shortage of long range radios and the environmentally imposed limitations on the radios the Rangers had made extended deep operations difficult. (10)

On 2 October 1951, after an intensive interview and selection process, 310 volunteers from the 82nd Airborne and 11th Airborne Divisions and the Airborne school began the first Ranger course. The criteria for these volunteers were that they be airborne qualified (only for these first three companies to save time in training), be over nineteen years old, be in top physical condition, have an army general aptitude score of at least ninety (a score higher than the standard infantryman requirement), and demonstrate individual ruggedness. (11) (While no criteria for individual ruggedness was provided, the training itself was designed to eliminate those who for physical or mental reasons were unqualified.)

Training was conducted by many instructors who were themselves veterans of Ranger Battalions, the 1st Special Service Force ( a combined American-Canadian mountain force ), or Merrill's Marauders during World War II. The training cycle lasted for six, forty-eight hour weeks, a total of 288 hours. The majority of the training was at night, under simulated combat conditions, using live ammunition. The cycle finished with "Hell Week" which consisted of a low-level airborne drop, followed by movement to a target that was destroyed with demolitions. The exercise covered an area of forty-nine square miles. (12)

The Ranger's training incorporated all the subjects originally discussed in the 7 September 1950 conference that planned the activation of the units. These subjects included foreign weapons, demolitions, field craft and guerrilla operations, map reading, escape and evasion, behind the lines sanitation, aerial resupply,

communications, intelligence, physical training and close combat, amphibious and air transport operations, cooperation and coordination with indigenous personnel, language, geography, and characteristics of the operational area. (13)

Based on Major Singlaub's comments about the need for cold weather and mountain training, the follow-on companies received three additional weeks of training at Fort Carson, Colorado. This training broke down into three phases, each phase corresponding to a week of training. The first phase consisted of classroom lectures and conditioning road marches. The second phase consisted of a field bivouac, individual survival, and practical exercises in low altitude mountaineering. Also, instruction in movement, evacuation procedures, and continued conditioning and orientation marches was incorporated into the training. The final phase incorporated tactical day and night mountain marches under simulated combat conditions, and missions with aerial resupply. The Ranger Center representative who observed the additional three weeks training in Colorado found it worthwhile and thought that it should be continued for all the following Ranger companies. (14)

The Rangers received training on control of air assets to enable them to direct air strikes in the enemy's rear area. The Rangers TOE authorized some air-ground radios but they received neither the radios nor authorization from the Air Force to use them. The Air Force contended that they did not have the equipment to lend to the Rangers and if the Rangers needed air support they could use the divisional assets from the unit to which they were attached. (15)

Because the Air Force refused to provide the necessary equipment and support, the Rangers lost a significant capability to bring fire on enemy rear areas.

On 13 November 1950, the Ranger Training Center published what the Center believed would be doctrine for the employment of the Rangers. The circular entitled, Draft Training Circular - Ranger Units, expanded the original missions for the Ranger companies and added assaults on railroads, critical terrain features, and enemy escape routes to their list of possible tasks. (16)

By June of 1951, the Department of the Army formalized and published two training tests, 7-20 and 7-21, that provided an evaluation of both Ranger platoons and companies. In these tests the Rangers were to be inserted into a specified area (by either air or amphibious means), move to and destroy a specified target. They then would face targets of opportunity during their return to friendly lines. These tests were designed to maintain the proficiency of the Ranger companies in Ranger tactics. (17) No record of an evaluation of the Rangers by these tests has so far been found.

A circular again titled Draft Training Circular - Ranger Units, dated 13 July 51, superceded both the 13 November 50 circular, and a pamphlet titled Ranger Company (Tentative), published on 28 March 1951. All of these documents adhered to the basic tenets of the 13 November circular. (18) In the July Training Circular, the Ranger Training Command articulated what was to be the last concept of operations for the Rangers prior to their inactivation. The mission

for the force remained unchanged from that envisioned by General Collins. Since there was no element of the company headquarters to conduct liaison with the divisions to whom they were attached, the circular called for a G-3 representative on the division staff to be identified to be the focal point for Ranger actions. (19) Although Van Houten believed that attachment of the Rangers to divisions was inappropriate, he had to develop doctrine that supported their employment. The result was a design that relied on capabilities and assets that the divisions of the 1950's did not possess.

The July 51 training circular went on to point out that there would be ample missions for which the Rangers could be used. Under the heading "Limitations," it stressed that Rangers were neither equipped nor organized for sustained combat operations, and that they became increasingly vulnerable to attack by reinforcing enemy units when left in positions for prolonged periods of time. Also, the Rangers relied on higher headquarters to provide air or amphibious lift for entry into the enemy rear. The Rangers were to operate behind enemy lines in full uniform and not as guerrilla forces, even though some of their tactics would be those of the guerrilla. (20)

Unless assigned objectives by a higher headquarters, the normal objectives for the Ranger companies would be within the sectors of the Divisions to which they were assigned. The Rangers saw themselves as an extension of the division commander's combat power. The Rangers believed that combat power previously reached only as far as the maximum range of the artillery. Now, they believed, the Ranger companies gave the division commander the capability to reach

deeper into the enemy's rear. The list of possible targets included command posts, artillery positions, signal centers, road and railroad bottlenecks, vehicle parks, airfields, supply installations, observation posts, critical terrain features, escape routes, assembly areas, and prisoner enclosures. The circular added that the Ranger companies were not designed to procure information and that only by the nature of Ranger operations would information of intelligence value be obtained. (21)

When assessing the situation in the objective area, the circular addressed four specific factors, namely, the general military situation, strength and disposition of enemy forces, terrain, and civilian population. Under these headings it outlined what were the most and least favorable operating circumstances for the Rangers. The most favorable circumstances obtained when the enemy was moving and unable to effectively coordinate and control his rear area security. When the enemy was weak and forced to defend on extended frontages, it would be easier for the Rangers to penetrate his forward positions and operate in his rear areas. Unfortunately for the Rangers, the divisions were seldom if ever able to paint an accurate picture of the situation and dispositions within the enemy's rear areas. The Division obtained information on the enemy by patrolling within the range of effective fire support. Once they obtained the information they engaged the target immediately by artillery or air. Thus, without accurate information on the enemy, it would be very difficult to employ the Rangers to maximum advantage.



Under "Terrain", the Rangers preferred to operate in restricted terrain (mountains, forests, or swamps), where the enemy's superior mobility would be reduced. Even against a force that lacked mechanical mobility, operations in the enemy's rear gives the enemy the advantage in mobility since he is able to operate in a relatively secure environment and one that he is familiar with. A hostile population would probably make Ranger operations more difficult to execute. The document went on to say that a difficult or well defended target could be destroyed by Rangers calling in artillery and airstrikes. Preferably the means of destruction would call as little attention as possible to the Ranger force. (22) As mentioned earlier the problem with radios made this method of employment very difficult.

In the document the writers stressed the need for detailed planning and intelligence support for Ranger operations. The majority of the intelligence for these operations, by necessity, had to come from assets organic to or in support of the division. (23) The Army divisions of 1950 lacked the equipment and personnel to provide this detailed intelligence support. The majority of the information obtained by the division intelligence personnel was obtained from the front line troops. This information was understandably limited and only obtained by the use of combat patrols. The Rangers, then, faced the distinct possibility that they might be forced to operate with little more information than that provided by soldiers in his fox hole.

When addressing Ranger tactics, the circular focused upon the attack and defense, while highlighting other aspects of the Ranger missions. Attacks were to be characterized by "stealth in reaching the objective; stealth whenever possible, in accomplishing the mission; and, except where the mission requires that the objective be held, a quick withdrawal." For the defense the Rangers believed they did not have the weapons or the numerical strength to conduct a sustained defensive operation. The document went on to state that while they were capable of seizing a piece of critical terrain, they would have to be relieved quickly. The definition of "quickly" was not given. (24)

Under "Communications," the Rangers were to use their AN/GRC-9 for direct point-to-point communications with the division, and as a method to request emergency resupply and fire support. Close air support had to be conducted on a preplanned basis, or forward air controllers who had received ranger training would be attached. If these personnel were not available, "Air Contactors" (Ranger personnel trained by the air force) would be used in this role. No method to control naval gunfire was available to the Rangers, and long range artillery fire either had to be relayed through the company's AN/GRC-9 or through a forward air control aircraft using one of the company's five PRC-10's. (25)

Overall, the Rangers deployed to Korea with adequate training but with serious deficiencies in equipment. Assigned to organizations that were neither equipped nor designed to provide proper intelligence or insertion/extraction support required for the mission,

and in a war that had changed significantly from the one confronted by General Collins in July-August of 1950, the Rangers made ready for battle.

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CHAPTER III  
RANGERS IN ACTION:  
JANUARY - APRIL 1951

Following the successful landing at Inchon on 15 September 1950, the entire strategic balance of forces changed on the Korean peninsula. From a position of desperate defense, the United Nations Forces were now exploiting victory.

By 26 September 1950, U.S. Forces reoccupied the capital of Korea, and by October 1st, MacArthur began offensive operations north of the 38th parallel. Through October and November his forces pushed north to the Yalu, with the 7th Infantry Division reaching the river on the 25th of November.

On 25-26 November 1950 the Communist Chinese entered the war when they launched a surprise offensive against MacArthur's forces. By December of 1950 the Chinese pushed the United Nations Command back to the 38th parallel. In January 1951 the Chinese forces launched another offensive, pushing the U.N. force back south of Seoul. In a short span of 6 months, the war had come full circle.

Operations between February and June of 1951 consisted of a series of indecisive battles between the opposing forces. In June of that year, the front stabilized again along the 38th parallel and truce talks began which would eventually culminate in a cease-fire agreement in July of 1953.

The first Ranger company to operate in Korea was the Eighth Army Ranger Company (8213th Army Unit) which was activated in Japan in September 1950 and served with the 25th Division until March of 1951. At that time it was replaced by the 5th Ranger Company. The 8213th participated in the drive to the Yalu and was used mainly as an extra infantry company of the 25th Division. It was mauled when the Chinese opened their offensive on 25 November 1950. At that time the company was dug in on a hill protecting the flank of Task Force Dolvin, the point element of the 25th Infantry Division's advance into North Korea. The Company Commander, Lieutenant Ralph Puckett, had fifty men left from his original seventy-four and by the time the company pulled off the hill eighteen would be able to walk. Puckett himself was severely wounded and was replaced by Captain John Paul Vann. (1)

In mid-December Captain Vann and his Ranger company conducted operations on the small islands off the Korean coast, guarding the flank of the Eighth Army and collecting intelligence on the Chinese. From the unit's logs, it appears that they mainly garrisoned the island and conducted amphibious patrols supported by Army landing craft until 1 January 1951.

During the month of January, the Rangers performed rear area security for service units, engaging in anti-guerrilla operations. Towards the end of the month they provided local security to the 25th Infantry Division tactical headquarters in Suwon. (2)

In February, the company participated in a reconnaissance in force operation in front of the 25th Division. This was followed by some unsuccessful combat patrols. On March 2nd, the company planned and attempted to execute a raid across the Han River, but was forced to abort the raid because of icing conditions in the river. From the 2nd to the 24th, the company conducted training and intelligence gathering operations by patrolling in front of the 25th Division positions. For the remainder of the month, the company maintained blocking positions and conducted one long range (9 kilometer) patrol forward of the friendly front lines. After this operation, the company received its inactivation order, effective 28 March 1951. (3)

The First Ranger Company served with the 2nd Infantry Division from January 1951 until the company's inactivation in August. Although the 2nd Division Commander was one of the few who wanted to maintain the Rangers, the division used them essentially in a regular infantry role. After the retreat from North Korea the 2nd Division was short on troops due to losses during its fight in the Battle of the Chongchon River. (4) As a result, the Rangers were used to strengthen weak parts of the line.

In late January, the company performed some long range reconnaissance to a depth of approximately 25 miles. In this operation the Rangers were transported by an armor task force to a forward operating base and conducted patrolling from this base for a limited time. The operation took place before the Chinese had arrived in sufficient strength to interfere with these types of



maneuvers. During one operation the Rangers penetrated 9 miles behind enemy lines and successfully attacked an enemy command post. (5) This operation, was the only time that the Rangers were credited with attacking an enemy command post.

By February, the Chinese had massed sufficient strength to continue their drive south. At the road junction of Chipyong-ni, the Eighth Army Commander, LTG Matthew B. Ridgway decided to make his first stand against the Chinese Army. The 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry was given the mission to hold. (6) The 1st Ranger Company assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division was attached to the 23rd and became part of the regimental reserve. The company was to serve as a fire brigade to plug any holes torn in the defenses by the five division Chinese attack. The Commander of the 23rd Infantry Regiment was Colonel Paul L. Freeman, a former member of Merrill's Marauders during WW II. Given this previous experience, it is reasonable to presume that Colonel Freeman should have been familiar with the potential capabilities and limitations of a long range penetration force. However, one must also remember that Merrill's Marauders was a brigade size, and not a company size force.

For ten days prior to the start of the battle, Colonel Freeman dug in his command and an attached French battalion. He centered his position on the road junction, organized an all around defense and created a tight defensive perimeter of a mile in diameter. Time was available to preplan fires and coordinate air support. (7)

The Regiment was fully deployed on the perimeter. The regimental reserve consisted solely of the 1st Ranger Company. Interestingly enough, the Ranger Company was not used in an attempt to slow the Chinese advance towards the 23rd's position, a mission entirely consistent with its capabilities. Beginning on the 13th of February pressure built around the 23rd's perimeter. After a company of the Second Battalion was overrun, the Battalion Commander, Lt.Col. James W. Edwards, requested assistance from the Regiment. Colonel Freeman was reluctant to commit his entire reserve force, since the Ranger Company was all he had. He finally agreed to send one platoon and a tank to assist the company under attack. (8)

A verbal dispute arose between one of the line commanders and the Ranger Company Commander when the latter came with the platoon sent to strengthen this threatened sector. The dispute was a result of the Ranger Company Commander only wanting to take orders from the Regimental Commander, which was the normal way of doing business. The dispute was settled by Captain John H. Ramsburg, a staff officer from the battalion headquarters coming forward to take command of the fight. The Rangers fought under Ramsburg's direction. The initial counterattacks failed and the rest of the Ranger Company was eventually committed to the battle. With armor support and additional infantry from the 2nd Battalion, the line was restored. During the course of the battle the line company commander attempted to get rid of the Ranger Company Commander by sending him to the rear with his wounded. Upon his return to the front line the Ranger Company Commander again tried to pull his

company out, believing that further counterattacks were futile. He was overruled by Captain Ramsburg and the subsequent counterattack was successful. (9)

While this might seem to have been a small event, it highlights the friction that developed between the Rangers who wanted to be used as they were intended and the line commanders who needed to resolve immediate problems. The Ranger Company commander wrote Colonel Van Houten describing how his company had been misused during the battle, but perhaps the responsibility for this situation rests with the Division Headquarters that attached the Ranger Company to the Regiment with no clear statement of intent or mission for its use. (10)

The 2nd Ranger Company (the only all black ranger unit) and the 4th Ranger Company were the only ranger units to conduct an airborne operation during the Korean War. Upon their arrival in-country, the 2nd spent a month in basic infantry and anti-guerrilla operations in support of the 7th Infantry Division. They were then attached to the 187TH Regimental Combat Team (RCT) for Operation RIPPER. Operation RIPPER was an airborne operation to be carried out in conjunction with the I U.S. Corps. The objective of the assault was to cut off retreating communist forces. If the enemy had been heavily mechanized the operation might have accomplished something. The Chinese however, easily evaded the trap by infiltrating north on foot through the hills and around the Rangers and 187th RCT blocking positions. The missions of seizing a terrain feature and establishing blocking positions conducted by the 4th and 2nd Ranger companies

could have been easily accomplished by a regular airborne unit. (11) The mission did not focus the Rangers on a specific enemy force or objective. Rather, it merely required them to seize a terrain feature and block enemy movement. After this operation, the company returned to the 7th Division.

The 4th Ranger Company, unlike the other companies who operated in support of a division, remained under the operational control of IX Corps. Besides conducting the airborne assault with the 2nd Company in March, the 4th conducted the only Ranger amphibious assault of the war. Because of a lack of equipment and the need for additional training after the six week trip to Korea, upon its arrival the 4th performed security missions and trained. The Eighth Army considered using the company to capture high ranking enemy officers, but this mission never came to fruition. In March, the 4th participated in the jump with the 2nd Ranger Company and, like them, were used just like any other airborne unit. (12) Even though the company was under the operational control of the Corps, for administration and logistics it remained assigned to a division.

In Washington, the Army staff attempted to get an evaluation of the performance of these initial Ranger Companies in combat. In February of 1951 the Army Chief of Operations requested specific comments from commanders in Korea on the method of employment, adequacy of Tables of Organization and Equipment, and contemplated operations of the Ranger Companies then deployed. (13)

Eighth Army replied on 18 February 1951. In this message, in answer to the method of employment, the army headquarters stated that without exception the Ranger Company had been employed as a complete unit. On the organization, they recommended an increase in radio operators and messengers but no change in equipment. For contemplated operations, they listed combat patrols against enemy command posts, artillery, and mortar positions as appropriate missions. Further suggestions included reconnaissance in force at extended distances, air drops behind enemy lines to strike command posts, supply lines, supply depots, and other key targets, and anti-guerrilla operations. (14) While most of these operations were consistent with what the Rangers had been trained to do, the anti-guerrilla operation was of theater design.

The comments of the Division Commanders to which the Ranger Companies had been assigned reflected the context of the war as a whole. At the time of this report, U.N. Forces had finally been able to stop the Chinese advance and were fighting a bitter see-saw battle with the CCF that would eventually lead to the stabilization of the front along the 38th parallel. Also, the companies mentioned by the commanders were the 1st, assigned to the 2nd Division since 1 January; the 2nd, with the 7th Division since 15 January; the 4th, with the 1st Cavalry since the same date. The 25th Division had had the provisional 8th Army Ranger Company attached since November of 1950. (15) Thus, the time for evaluation of the companies was relatively short, a period of under three months.

Major General Bryant E. Moore, the commanding officer of IXth Corps, indicated that the 4th Ranger company was relieved from attachment from the 1st Cavalry Division because its equipment had not arrived in theater with its soldiers. He also commented that the troops were in need of physical training due to their six to eight week trip overseas. Because of this the company had been employed in local security and training missions only. Once these deficiencies were corrected, Moore planned to use them on stay-behind ambushes should the division withdraw, then intelligence, and anti-guerrilla operations in his rear area. (16)

Major General Clark L. Ruffner, of the 2nd Infantry Division, had high praise for his attached Ranger Company and recommended that each Division in the Army have one attached. His main concern was that any modification of the Table of Organization might result in loss of the company's foot mobility. Major General Claude B. Ferenbaugh, of the 7th Division, said that because of the missions assigned the division, requiring the employment of battalion combat teams over extended distances and widely separated sectors, the Ranger Company had not been assigned missions consistent with its capabilities. He noted that the unit had received "high praise from the units it has been attached to." The only problem he saw with the unit at that time was that it was at 61% strength and was not receiving replacements (Remember that the 2nd Ranger Company was an all black unit and this complicated the training of replacements). (17)

Finally, Major General Kean, who had the 8th Army Ranger Company, commented that while suitable Ranger targets had been scarce, he believed that the company had proven its worth to the division. He also believed that the Table of Organization and Equipment should be augmented to include messing and administrative support to make the company self-sufficient. (18)

Unbeknownst to the Ranger Training Command, the Eighth Army was continuing an evaluation of the Ranger Companies that would eventually be used to justify their inactivation. This study had been initiated following a request from G-3 Operations, Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army. On 6 February 1951 the Chief of Staff's Office directed G-3, Eighth Army to determine the effectiveness of the Ranger Companies presently employed in Korea so that a determination of the feasibility of the activation of Ranger Companies for each regiment of the Army could be made. (19) By 18 February FECOM replied that the Ranger Companies had not been employed for a sufficient amount of time to determine their effectiveness. G-3 Operations also directed Army Field Forces to have their observer teams provide information on the effectiveness of the Rangers. (20)

At this point two concepts emerged regarding proper employment of the Rangers. Inadvertently these concepts worked against each other. On the one hand General Collins and the Army Staff wanted to determine if Ranger companies at regimental level were feasible. On the other Colonel Van Houten believed that the Rangers should be organized into a separate Battalion. In between were the major

commands who saw the concept of forming Ranger companies at regimental level as a threat to the effectiveness of their regular forces from whom the personnel would be drawn.

On 26 March 1951, Colonel Van Houten wrote a personal letter to General Collins and attached a letter from the 1st Ranger Company Commander, then assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division. As mentioned previously, this Company Commander believed that his company had been inappropriately used during the battle of Chip'yong-ni and had written to Colonel Van Houten about the incident. Van Houten in turn relayed this letter to General Collins to point out how a Ranger Company had been used as a reserve force, rather than as originally intended by General Collins. (21)

Also during the month of March, a staff study by the Ranger Training Command answered a request from the field that the Ranger companies be broken down for an unspecified period to enhance the combat capabilities of the regular infantry companies. Ranger Command recommended disapproval of this proposal and suggested instead that selected individuals from the regular units attend ranger school and return to their parent unit. (22) This action reflected the opinion growing in the military that the field commanders saw a need to enhance the overall effectiveness of the infantry rather than having a small group of specialized units.



The final recommendations from the March Ranger Training Command study were endorsed by the Chief of Army Field Forces and the Commanding Generals of the Infantry School and Third Army. These recommendations were;

- (1) That the attached Ranger Companies not be broken down for attachment to subordinate units.
- (2) That the Ranger Company, when not in combat, be used to train other infantry units under the control and supervision of the Ranger Company Commander.
- (3) That successful combat actions of Rangers be publicized to rifle company troops as an example and standard. (23)

The Army G-3, Major General Maxwell Taylor, indicated in his indorsement of his staff's recommendation that no action would be taken as a result of this study. He also stated that the policy of the Department of the Army was to give the "widest possible latitude" to its field commanders in their use of attached units as long as it was consistent with accepted policy and doctrine. (24) Unfortunately, at this time it appeared that the Rangers had no accepted policy or doctrine.

With Divisions lacking the intelligence assets to find suitable targets for the Rangers, commanders used them as a reserve force, a mission which the Rangers lacked the manpower and logistical support to accomplish. The Rangers were now to be judged not on the capability of what they could do, but on the inadequacy of the divisions to provide the needed support and on the inability of the Ranger companies to accomplish the missions of regular infantry.

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## CHAPTER IV

### REACTION AND RETRENCHMENT: THE RANGER COMPANIES INACTIVATED

From April through July 1951 the 1st Ranger Company conducted some deep patrols and harrassing raids and supported a task force of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division along with operations with other regular infantry units. (1)

In April, the 2nd Ranger Company occupied blocking positions along the Imjin River and conducted rear guard operations. During June it conducted some patrolling operations and in July served as the security guard for the division command post. (2)

The 3rd Ranger Company did not join the 3rd Infantry Division until 3 April. At that time the Division was on the defensive. As part of these defensive operations, the Division launched a number of task force size reconnaissance in force operations in which the company participated. The Rangers basically conducted missions that could have been performed by any infantry company. The Rangers conducted some patrolling in June, and in July provided a guard for the artillery forward firing positions. They also conducted training for three companies of the 9th South Korean Division in Ranger tactics. (3)

In April the IX Corps alerted the 4th Ranger Company for a special operation. The IX Corps zone of operations was split by the Pukhan River. The dam that controlled the water level in this river was under the control of the Chinese and was known as the Hwachon Dam. The Corps feared that if the Chinese opened the floodgates, the waters would destroy bridges and supply dumps supporting the Corps. General Hodge, the Corps Commander, gave orders that the Dam was to be seized and the gates rendered inoperative. (4)

The operation to seize the Hwachon Dam points out some of the problems that the Ranger Companies experienced in Korea. On the night of 7 April the G-3 of the 1st Cavalry Division, LTC Carlson, gave the Ranger Company Commander, Captain Dorsey B. Anderson, the mission to destroy the control mechanism that operated the dam flood gates. On 8 April Captain Anderson conducted a reconnaissance of a similar dam in the Division's sector, so his special teams would know how to accomplish the mission. On 9 April while conducting an aerial reconnaissance of the target dam, Anderson received word that his company was already conducting an attack on the dam in conjunction with other units of the division. This attack, decided upon and executed with the Ranger Company, without informing the Ranger Company Commander, is indicative of the confused and haphazard planning and execution by the 1st Cavalry Division during this operation. It highlights the frequent lack of planning and coordination involving the employment of Ranger Companies in Korea. By the time the Ranger Company Commander returned to his company,

his command was positioned behind a regular infantry company of the 1st Cavalry Division. The frontal attack by the regular infantry company failed and the 4th Ranger Company went back into reserve.(5)

On 10 April the Ranger Company Commander met with the battalion commander who had the mission of seizing the dam. Anderson had developed two possible options for seizing the dam. His preferred option was for the Rangers to conduct an amphibious assault at night to destroy the flood gate control mechanism in a quick raid. The alternate plan was for the Rangers and a conventional force to seize the dam together. Since there was some confusion from higher headquarters as to what the mission really was, the battalion commander decided to seize the machinery, using a combined force of Rangers and infantry to secure the dam site, or to destroy the dam control mechanisms if the Rangers were unable to hold the high ground east of the dam. This plan envisioned committing the Rangers as an infiltration force to move behind the dam and establish a blocking position to prevent enemy reinforcement of the dam itself. Regular forces would seize the dam and destroy the floodgate mechanism if the dam could not be held. At a 2200 hour meeting, the staff decided upon this final plan, and set an execution time of 0300 hours the next day. (6)

At 0345 11 April the Ranger force hit the beach below the dam. They had accomplished the crossing of the reservoir in nine boats with four working motors. They quickly secured the beachhead and by 0615 had secured their initial objective. In trying to move towards the high ground they encountered heavy Chinese resistance.

One Ranger platoon became disorganized and reassembled on the beach. The Rangers were subsequently reinforced by another company of infantry, but at 1630 were told to withdraw. A supporting attack by other elements of the 1st Cavalry Division was also unsuccessful. The Chinese, fully alerted by the premature attack on 9 April, were now defending the dam in strength. The operation turned out to have been unnecessary as the water levels in the Pukhan River never reached a point that threatened the Corps. The operation points out the haste which in many cases precluded the most effective use of the Rangers. Detailed planning and rehearsal for a Ranger operation took time and time evidently was not available to the 1st Cavalry Division. Captain Anderson attempted to plan and conduct an operation that could have demonstrated the potential of Ranger Companies in Korea. A quick raid without the commitment of large numbers of conventional forces may have accomplished the mission without the needless, and as it turned out futile expenditure of resources. After the hasty attack on the 9th all tactical surprise was lost and the option for a quick raid on the dam was justifiably abandoned. (7)

After the operation, the company returned to IX Corps control and assisted the 1st Cavalry Division in the construction of defensive positions. During this time the 4th Company conducted patrolling operations that for the most part could have been accomplished by regular units. (8)

The 5th Ranger Company, after replacing the 8th Army Ranger Company in support of the 25th Division, conducted reconnaissance, patrolling and served as assault troops. As part of a task force they conducted an eight mile penetration into enemy territory. However, like the other companies, the 5th was used mainly as an extra company for the division and moved to wherever extra soldiers were needed. (9)

The 8th Army Ranger Company was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division, and in April was used in their first action. The Chinese had launched their spring offensive and had overrun the South Korean 6th Division on the right flank of the 24th. The Division commander of the 24th directed the Rangers to establish contact with the Koreans on this exposed flank. This contact was made on Hill 628. A vastly superior Chinese force attacked Hill 628 and routed the Rangers. The members of the company were already disillusioned by their use by the division and this initial engagement did nothing to strengthen the working relationship. (10)

In July the 8th Ranger Company performed the missions of a regular line unit. They were attached to multiple units and suffered from their dependence on support from the units to which they were attached. Since these attachments did not last for prolonged periods of time, the Rangers sometimes did without messing and other administrative support. In July, the Company was used in spoiling attacks against the Chinese, leading the executive officer of the company to state that the company performed as a conventional unit. (11)



The problems that the 8th Ranger Company faced were not atypical. Captain Martin Blumenson, writing on the 8th Company after the battle of Hill 628, could have been writing for the other Ranger Companies as well:

The 8th Ranger Company in past operations in Korea has not performed in any other way except as a straight infantry company. Hardships are created both administratively and tactically. For instance, one 2 1/2 ton truck is authorized the company; when the company came overseas, it had five 2 1/2 ton truck loads of equipment. The Ranger Company is both too small and too large. It is too small to make a concerted attack five or six miles behind enemy lines by aerial drop. It is too large to infiltrate and penetrate enemy lines as a company. (12)

During the period 28 April to 8 May, the Army G-3 section in Washington conducted a staff visit to the Far East Command. On the subject of Ranger Companies, they made the following comments:

A number of division commanders expressed the opinion that it was difficult to find suitable missions for these units. Several questioned the advisability of continuing to allow the Rangers to operate as currently organized, rather than integrating them within divisional units. (13)

In June the Office of the Chief of Army Field Forces Observer Team Number Four reinforced this comment when the team's field surveys indicated that the Rangers were used for security and that no suitable missions had been assigned to Ranger units. (14)

By May 16th Colonel Van Houten, having received advanced word of an impending report from FECOM on the Ranger Companies, wrote a direct letter to MG Taylor in Washington on the subject and substance of the report. This report, written by the Eighth Army staff, recommended that the six Ranger Companies in Korea be formed into a provisional battalion and attached to the 187th Regimental Combat team for operations and logistics. (15)

Van Houten went on to say that the Eighth Army study was based on rather brief reports from the divisions to which the rangers were attached. Two of the divisions that had Rangers assigned the longest recommended they be retained at the division level, the 2nd Division as a company and the 7th as a battalion. Van Houten also stated that the Ranger Training Command believed from the start that Ranger Companies at division level would not meet General Collins' requirements. Training Command concluded that, after adequate testing, Ranger Battalions attached to headquarters higher than division level would be more effective. (16)

Colonel Van Houten wrote that he and his staff had prepared a tentative Table Of Organization and Equipment for a ranger battalion and that the provisional battalion, if formed, would only obtain logistical support from the 187th Regimental Combat Team. He judged that if the Ranger Battalion came under the unit's operational control it would become just another airborne battalion.

In a letter dated 19 May 1951, FECOM forwarded its endorsement of the Eighth Army Ranger study to Department of the Army. This letter outlined what FECOM saw as the principal problems with the Ranger Companies:

- a. The Ranger company is too small to entrust with a deep penetration mission. (The Acting Commanding General, Second Infantry Division, did not concur)
- b. It is difficult for a division staff to plan an airborne operation for a company-sized unit. This difficulty is aggravated by geographical separation of the division headquarters and the supporting Air Force agencies.
- c. By their very nature, Ranger units attract personnel that are high in leadership potentiality and battlefield efficiency. Such personnel could be better used if spread throughout conventional infantry units. ...
- d. A battalion-size unit at corps level would be more appropriate and could be better employed in the role for which Ranger units were intended. This would, however, violate a basic principle relating to use of Airborne troops in anything less than RCT strength. ...
- e. The employment of United States Army Ranger units in Korea is made more difficult by racial differences between the Oriental and Caucasian. These differences make deep patrol missions more difficult and the language barrier adds to the problem. (17)

The document concluded that because of the treatment accorded prisoners by the enemy, General Ridgway refused to permit the employment of Ranger companies in deep penetrations. (18)

On 2 June the Department of the Army received a message modifying and clarifying FECOM's position. In this message FECOM explained again that due to conditions in Korea it had been "unsound" to use Ranger Companies in the manner for which they were intended. The units were instead being used for conventional operations. They also added, that they now believed that Ranger units, even of battalion size, would not be of use in the theater. FECOM further recommended that the Ranger units currently in FECOM be disbanded and that no larger units of this kind be formed for use in their theater. Ridgway as the commanding general of Eighth Army agreed with this position. (19)

FECOM's 2 June message triggered a series of staff actions by the Army Staff in Washington. By 6 June, the Army G-3, Major General Taylor, had started to disband the Ranger Companies in FECOM in order to use those personnel to fill shortages in the 187th RCT. Major General Taylor requested recommendations and comments on FECOM's evaluation of Ranger units from the other major commands.(20) FECOM's formal comments were not relayed to the Ranger Training Command because Colonel Van Houten had already made his comments in his letter to MG Taylor. (21) This series of events suggests that Generals Ridgway and Taylor possibly saw a threat to the Airborne regiments in the creation of Ranger Battalions. Both men served in the Airborne during World War II, and would have perceived a duplication in effort in having both Airborne and Ranger units. When the Rangers were inactivated, some of the personnel were used to fill shortages in the 187th Regimental Combat Team.

In June, Colonel Van Houten sent his own man, Lieutenant Colonel Adams, to Korea to observe the Rangers in action. Although he knew that the decision to inactivate the Ranger Companies had already been made, Adams sent his report back to Van Houten anyway.

Adams highlighted all the complaints he had heard about the Rangers: not steadily employed, how they robbed other units of leadership, and that line units could do the job with specialized training. (22)

Adams saw the need, if they were to be maintained, to make Ranger Companies self-sufficient and able to conduct sustained combat operations. His preferred method of employment was as a Ranger Battalion to be used for strategic penetration of the enemy rear areas. (23) Lieutenant Colonel Adams' comments in this report appeared to be colored by the understandable frustration of confronting an evaluation and decision made by the FECOM staff without the opportunity to provide any input.

In July, comments came in from the European Command, Army Field Forces and other senior commanders on the 8th Army's decision to inactivate the Rangers. Most saw the Rangers as a group of highly skilled personnel who could more productively be used throughout the army. The Commander in Chief, United States European Command, believed that they might be needed in battalion strength for special operation type missions. Army War Plans saw the possibility of using Ranger units in Alaskan or Caribbean contingency

plans. This was to be done in an effort not to deplete the strategic reserve on peripheral operations, a type of strategic economy of force operation. (24)

On 13 July, Colonel Hill, Chief of the Organization Branch G-3, Department of the Army, reported to Major General Jenkins, who had replaced Major General Taylor as G-3, Army Operations. Colonel Hill briefed Jenkins on the Ranger program and received General Jenkins thoughts and guidance on the subject. (25)

In this meeting General Jenkins said he saw four fundamental faults in the Ranger program as it was then conceived. The first was the belief that the qualifications for Ranger or marauder-type personnel required greater mental or physical qualifications than those needed for regular infantry duty. The second was that the Army had created a type of "pseudo morale" in Ranger units with the result that the Army now had "prima-donna" units. It was Jenkins' conviction that this was not the kind of morale he wanted. He also believed that the Rangers were not exposed to any more difficult duty than that experienced by the average front line infantryman and "for much less of the time." Finally, he said that we had "oversold ourselves" with the Rangers and expected too much from them. (26)

Colonel Hill noted that General Jenkins was unalterably opposed to the formation of "prima-donna" units, lowering the standards of regular infantry units by taking their best soldiers, and giving extra pay to ranger trained personnel. (27) The importance of this meeting

derived from the fact that Colonel Hill was given the mission of writing the staff recommendation on what to do with the Ranger program. His ability to remain objective in his evaluation was almost certainly influenced by General Jenkins' clear and unequivocal statement of his own position in this matter.

Colonel Van Houten also wrote the Army G-3 in July and made one last attempt to reorganize Rangers as a battalion size force. He again pointed out that the commanders of the 7th and 2nd Divisions, who had Rangers the longest, both recommended their retention. (28) His efforts or comments were not even noted in the final action memorandum forwarded to General Collins. By 2 August all of General Collins' staff recommended inactivation of the units throughout the Army, and the formulation of a program of instruction that would train leaders in regular infantry units. (29)

On 15 August, the Vice Chief of Staff, General J.E. Hull, received a personal letter from General Thomas E. Handy, the Commander in Chief in Europe. In this letter Handy indicated that FECOM's comments were valid in his theater as well and that the possible use of these forces in a Special Forces role to support guerrilla warfare was not considered feasible. (30)

As a result of these and Army staff comments, the Department of the Army released an order on 3 October 1951 directing that Ranger training be extended to all combat units of the United States Army. In addition, the order redefined Ranger operations as "overt operations in enemy territory, the duration of which does not

normally exceed forty-eight hours." Offensive missions of reconnaissance, destruction of communications, and harrassment or disruption of enemy operations fell within this definition. The requirement for airborne qualification was removed, the Infantry School was tasked with establishing the Ranger courses and the remaining Ranger Companies in the U.S. Army were inactivated. (31) Thus ended the brief and checkered combat experiences of Ranger Companies in the Korean War.



#### CHAPTER IV ENDNOTES

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25. Memorandum for General Ogden, 14 July 1951, G-3 Ranger Records.

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28. Letter, Van Houten To Duff, 19 July 1951, G-3 Ranger Records.

29. Memorandum for the Chief of Army Plans Division, 2 August 1951, G-3 Ranger Records.

30. Letter, Handy to Hull, 15 August 1951, G-3 Ranger Records.

31. Letter, Subject: Ranger Training, 3 October 1951, G-3 Ranger Records and CARL.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Generally in battle it is essential to use elite troops as the vanguard sharp point. First, because this strengthens our own determination; second, because they blunt the enemy's edge. - Sun Tzu

In September of 1952, the Eighth Army Historical Section published a classified monograph. In this monograph, Special Problems of the Korean Conflict, a chapter was devoted to the Ranger units that served in the Eighth Army.

This document related how the airborne capabilities of the Rangers were used only once, when the 2nd and 4th companies were attached to the 187th Regimental Combat Team for the jump at Munsan-ni on 23 March 1951. At one other time their employment by airborne insertion was planned to intercept some high-ranking enemy personnel, but this operation was cancelled. The only Ranger amphibious operation occurred to seize the Hwachon Dam on 11 April 1951. As related in the previous chapter, this operation was unsuccessful. (1)

In ground infiltration the Rangers were said to be used to some extent by their parent divisions. The 1st Ranger Company was the only one credited with having penetrated nine miles behind enemy lines to destroy a command post. The other companies conducted raids and ambushes to capture prisoners, create confusion, and emplace mines in the enemy's rear areas. The monograph also made the comment

that the companies were too large a unit for division-type infiltration missions and that platoon or squad-size elements would have been more effectively used. (2)

According to this monograph, their lack of Korean language proficiency and physical differences made the presence of the Rangers much easier to detect. One Division Commander recommended that the Rangers be augmented with Koreans to enhance the capabilities of their listening posts, but his suggestion was never implemented. With the truce negotiations beginning in June of 1951, Eighth Army was making an effort to limit friendly casualties. Because of this, Division Commanders were reluctant to send Rangers behind enemy lines where they might have to be reinforced or rescued. Because of the extended distances that divisions were defending, almost all units were committed to the line and no forces were readily available to reinforce or rescue the Rangers. (3)

Many of these difficulties should have been offset by using the Rangers at night, operations for which they extensively trained. However, the Division Commanders were reluctant to employ them at night. The Communists did the majority of their movement at night and the Rangers might well be forced off preplanned routes, disrupting the planned artillery fires of front line units. (4) During a briefing by this author to General Gavin, then VII Corps Commander, in 1984, on Long Range Reconnaissance Units in Europe, the General commented that one of the biggest problems American forces had with Ranger units in Korea was the no-fire areas they created when they were operating to a unit's front.

While commanders recognized the capability the Ranger Companies afforded them in theory, they believed they were too small in size and not properly organized to sustain independent operations for a prolonged period of time. Ranger targets were not normally present to the division's immediate front, and divisions either failed to identify or overran targets before the Rangers could be used against them. The divisions found it difficult to conduct ranger operations because the necessary intelligence, air force, or naval agencies were not represented. The division staffs were heavily committed to fighting the current battle even without trying to employ Rangers.(5)

The missions the Ranger Companies did receive were holding key terrain features, providing support for tanks, screening flanks, securing command posts, and intelligence gathering missions. In short, the units were employed as regular infantry. When they were employed in this role, their lack of administrative support and lack of numbers made them more of a burden than an asset. Lacking the ability for sustained combat, they often heard the comment that "they did not pull their weight in sustained combat." The belief in the front lines was that if a special operation was needed, troops could be withdrawn from the line and specially trained. This way the best of both worlds could be achieved, a unit capable of sustained combat and one that could perform special operations. (6)

Additionally, commands viewed Ranger units as uneconomical; they attracted personnel who were "high in leadership potential and battlefield efficiency," thus depriving line units of good soldiers and

leaders. Since casualties in small organizations follow no identifiable patterns, and replacements from the Ranger Training Command arrived only once every three months, Ranger Companies complicated the theater replacement system. (7)

The divisions were annoyed by having to arrange training jumps every three months so that the Rangers could maintain airborne proficiency and draw their extra pay. This was aggravated by the fact that they were never employed in combat this way. The 1952 monograph closed with the comment that the companies were inactivated because of their administrative weakness, the difficulties of planning Ranger missions, the factor of oriental armies (i.e. masses of soldiers), and the extremely broad frontages of the Korean theater. (8)

In order to assess properly how the Rangers were used or misused in Korea, one must first look at the enemy, terrain, and nature of the war the Rangers faced during the period of their existence.

General Collins' original concept was based on an enemy capability demonstrated early in the war. In July and August of 1950 when he developed this concept, American units were being committed piecemeal into Korea. Operating with extended open flanks, American units were constantly demoralized by North Korean flanking and rear attacks against their artillery positions and command posts. Understandably General Collins could see no reason why we could not use the same tactics against them.

Other than the 8th Army Ranger Company, the majority of the Ranger Companies mainly fought against the Chinese. The enemy played a major role in determining how effective the Rangers could be. A clear understanding of the enemy is needed to see how they influenced Ranger tactics and effectiveness.

The enemy the Rangers faced consisted of Chinese and North Korean soldiers whose army was basically unmechanized. By December of 1950 the majority of combat elements of the North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA) and the Chinese Communist Army (CCF) consisted of light infantry supported by mortars and medium artillery. Only in the initial stages of the conflict were they able to have armor forces available and effectively use them. The United Nations Force's complete control of the air made the use of mechanized forces by the NKPA/CCF both difficult and costly. (9)

In the offense the enemy made a concerted effort to offset the U.N. fire superiority by the use of ruses and camouflage discipline. Regrouping and re-equipping of enemy units took place beyond the range of artillery and patrols. (10) The movement forward to attack positions took place from five to thirty-six hours prior to the assault. (11)

The enemy stockpiled supplies only when massing to attack. The normal configuration for his supply depots was at reduced size and

widely dispersed. (12) Due to the lack of mechanization of his forces, these supply dumps consisted mainly of small arms, artillery and mortar ammunition, and food.

In the attack, the Communists relied mainly on mortars and automatic weapons. This again simplified resupply of combat elements and kept the resupply situation manageable. The enemy's recognized susceptibility to air attack made him prioritize his use of motor transport and use it only for the hauling of supplies and wounded. (13)

The NKPA/CCF used sophisticated tactics of penetration and infiltration. Bayonet companies and penetration companies breached the U.N. lines and attacked command posts and artillery positions. Every NKPA/CCF regiment had one or two of these companies. (14)

Other units of the NKPA and CCF were designated as "isolating units." These units usually accompanied an enveloping force and were given missions to attack reinforcements and destroy retreating U.N. units. (15)

Counteracting the isolating units and the infiltration techniques of the North Koreans in the early stages of the war, then, was one of the primary reasons for the creation of the Ranger Companies. The North Koreans would mingle with Korean refugees, and as they were processing through the U.N. lines other North Koreans would launch an attack. In the confusion these bogus "refugees" would



complete the infiltration. These soldiers would either conduct reconnaissance, attacks against U.N. rear areas, or link up with guerrilla forces in the rear of the U.N. lines. (16)

Attacking tank parks was one of the missions envisioned for the Ranger Companies. The dispersal of NKPA and CCF armor made this task more difficult. The effectiveness of U.N. air power limited the use of mass tank formations by the NKPA and the CCF to the early stages of the conflict. Later, they employed tanks in one's and two's in direct support of infantry. At the most they were employed in groups of four to five and were restricted by allied air superiority to movement at night. (17)

Until the fall of 1951, the artillery of the NKPA and the CCF was unsuited for the war of movement. The artillery normally deployed forward only in preparation to attack and remained dispersed and camouflaged prior to its employment, making it difficult for the Rangers to destroy. As the battle lines stabilized, the North Korean and Chinese artillery vastly improved in both quality and quantity. (18)

The NKPA and the CCF favored night attacks because of the preponderance of allied air and artillery fire. Communications consisted of radio, bugles, whistles, flags and messengers. (19) These communication means, while primitive, could not be easily disrupted by allied countermeasures.

The main weaknesses of communist attack doctrine were; (1) inflexibility, (2) lack of sufficient logistical support to sustain extended operations, (3) lack of communications at higher echelons that may have contributed to inflexibility in the attack, and (4) lack of flank or tactical security during the march. (20) While these weaknesses were such that they could have been exploited by the Rangers, the intelligence available was insufficient to target enemy assets near the front lines.

In the first phase of the Korean war, the enemy employed two types of defensive tactics. The elastic defense and the stubborn defense. In the elastic defense, the NKPA employed a position defense (oriented on the retention of terrain) and the CCF employed a mobile defense (one oriented on the enemy). When expecting to be in a position for three to four weeks, the Communists employed a defensive army using a "one up and two back" technique. After a penetration by an enemy force, the two divisions in reserve would counterattack to regain lost ground. If this was not successful, reserve armies would launch a major counterattacks. (21)

The NKPA employed a mobile defense that traded space for time against a superior force. After the enemy had penetrated the forward defenses, the NKPA counterattacked locally until the enemy's attack reached its culminating point. At that time the North Koreans would launch a major counterattack to regain lost ground. (22)

As the war became one of attrition and static positions during the summer of 1951 both the NKPA and the CCF used the stubborn defense. After they reached the 38th parallel, the communists no longer wished to trade space for time. They wished to hold as much territory as possible while the truce talks progressed. Because of the U.N. superiority in firepower the communists again adjusted their tactics to suit the situation and attempted to destroy smaller units instead of launching massed attacks against divisions. (23)

The communists organized their forces on key terrain. The longer they remained in position the more elaborate and in greater depth the defenses became. Initially, U.N. forces were able to break through with armor task forces and conduct deep raids into the enemy's rear. (24) As the enemy positions became stronger, and with the policy to limit friendly casualties during the truce talks, these raids became less feasible, both tactically and politically. As the stalemate dragged on, the defensive positions began to resemble the western front during World War I.

The Communists emplaced both of these defensive schemes in great depth and presented little if any identifiable center of gravity for the assaulting force. Overall, the enemy's massive light infantry force could survive and fight with an austere logistic base, and a lack of dependence on mechanization or a sophisticated command and control system. This made him practically invulnerable to the effects of deep penetration raids by organizations like the Ranger Companies.

The terrain of Korea also contributed to the Rangers' ineffectiveness. For the purposes of this study, the military aspects of the terrain in Korea can be broken down into three main categories: observation/fields of fire, obstacles, and cover and concealment. Observation in Korea is generally good in the coastal areas, coastal lowlands, and river plains. Both the coastal lowlands and river plains are commanded by adjoining hills and mountains. Inland, numerous peaks and narrow valleys obstruct observation from any one point. The best fields of fire are in the coastal areas. The terrain inland is characterized by sharp ridgelines and steep cliffs and severely restricts fields of fire. (25)

Because of these aspects of the terrain, obstacles to movement are numerous throughout the country. Cross country foot movement is difficult and vehicular movement is possible only along established roads and trails. Some mobility is possible by following streams, but this is restricted by flooding during the summer monsoon season. Cover is good to excellent in valleys, along the sharp ravines, and on the rocky slopes of the mountains or hills. Dikes around rice fields and stream banks also offer good cover. Concealment is generally offered by the broken nature of the terrain. Deforestation during the Japanese occupation greatly reduced the wooded area in the country and the trees that are found are usually at the higher elevations. (26)

These aspects of terrain made daylight patrolling without enemy detection risky. Even during periods of good visibility, navigation was

difficult and foot patrolling was generally restricted to within a few kilometers of the front. The broken nature of the terrain also contributed to patrols having physical difficulty in conducting long range patrol operations. These characteristics of the terrain, made dismounted ground infiltration a formidable task for the Rangers.

The nature of the conflict and the nature of the U.S. Army also worked against the effective employment of Ranger Companies. The majority of the Ranger Companies arrived after January 1951. The Chinese intervention and the wish of the United States not to widen the war combined to make operational objectives limited. In January of 1951 Eighth Army had suffered severe losses and was working under a troop ceiling constraint that resulted in a shortage of Infantryman. Eighth Army compensated for this by the implementation of the Korean Augmentation of the United States Army Program 1950-51. However, there was still a shortage of front line soldiers, against an enemy that did not lack in manpower. (27) In these circumstances it is not surprising that the extra company that the Ranger Company gave the division was used for missions other than what it was initially intended for.

Although relatively brief, in the time the Rangers were used by the divisions there were some opportunities for Ranger employment in the original role envisioned for them during some of the Eighth Army's counteroffenses. After April of 1951, the majority of the action conducted by the Divisions was limited and for the most part defensive, presenting little if any opportunity for Ranger employment. (28)

The way the U.S. Army fought the war also influenced how Rangers were used. The need to limit casualties and the fact that if patrols got in trouble a relief force was expected to extract them contributed to a conservative attitude among commanders regarding long range patrolling. Long range patrols required the establishment of battalion patrol bases to support them or a motorized relief force. (29) General Ridgway's requirement that airborne operations not be conducted with units smaller than a Regimental Combat Team effectively eliminated this means of infiltration from the Rangers. Most of the divisions with which the Rangers served were located in the interior of the country and in any case would not have had either the boats or other support craft to support deep amphibious operations. Also, the Division commanders were not especially interested in operations that had little if any impact on the immediate battle. Ridgway eventually instituted a policy that limited Ranger operations because he was concerned they may become prisoners of war. By June 1951, any operation above battalion level required FECOM's approval. In this environment it is not surprising that the need for a deep penetration unit at division was negligible.

The Rangers also suffered from their role as an elite unit. Resentment, such as that exhibited by Major General Jenkins' reference to "prima-donna units," is often a reason for disbanding units of this nature. Since units of this kind tend to be created out of one man's idea, they are susceptible to institutionalized backlash. A unit that is created quickly, with impetus from the top

down, as with Collins' support for the Rangers, does not often have the institutional foundation to resist attack. Lack of equipment also makes it easy to eliminate these types of units with little or no impact on the force as a whole. Since the Rangers were formed as a test unit, this also lessened their chances for survival. (30)

When units like the Rangers are placed in sustained combat operations, a process begins called "selection-destruction." (31) When placed in this environment, as the Rangers were, a unit often takes heavy casualties. As was the case with the Rangers, the personnel and training base was too small to sustain the force sufficiently. The result is that the unit is destroyed executing missions it was never designed to accomplish, and the resulting casualties are used as reason for inactivation. This is precisely what happened to the Rangers.

The Ranger Companies of the Korean War also exhibited many of the weaknesses exhibited by light infantry forces throughout history. They lacked a sufficient logistical structure for sustained operations, requiring significant support in prolonged campaigns. Misuse by higher commanders was compounded by their placement at a headquarters that could not support their intelligence or operational requirements. (32)

Would the Rangers have been more effective under another type of organization (i.e. battalion)? While guerrilla and commando operations directed by FECOM may not have been strategically successful, they were tactically successful in killing enemy soldiers

and assisting the air force in both target acquisition and pilot recovery. (33) A Ranger Battalion operating at FECOM level would have had more access to intelligence on enemy rear areas, and more importantly, access to an insertion and extraction capability for deep operations. This suggests that use as a separate battalion might very well have been more appropriate for the Rangers in Korea.

A Ranger Battalion would not have been exposed to the criticism of the division commanders that eventually resulted in their inactivation. However, Ridgway would have still taken over FECOM and his policies to limit casualties and prisoners and the prohibition on airborne operations would have continued to degrade the Rangers' operations. Also, the majority of behind the line operations conducted by FECOM were being conducted by former North Koreans until this became both politically and militarily unsound. (34)

In summary, the Ranger Companies of the Korean War were never effectively employed in Korea. The reasons for their inactivation at division level were justified, but they were never adequately tested and evaluated to determine their effectiveness under some other organization (battalion) or command relationship. The initial test units should have been small and concentrated in one or two divisional units. The determination of the effectiveness of a unit at Army and theater level can not be judged by its performance at division level.

Van Houten recognized and hoped to correct the problems identified by the Division Commanders. He was never given the chance.



Correctly the Army recognized that General Collins in his initial concept wanted to instill the entire Army with the Ranger spirit. However, the Army was shortsighted in not seeing the need for specialized forces at a higher level. Furthermore, by June of 1951 the intent of the fighting in Korea was to obtain a negotiated peace, not a decisive military outcome. In that environment, it became even more difficult to judge properly the legitimacy or effectiveness of units like the Ranger Companies.

The creation of the Ranger school was the best way to give American units the same capability of the CCF/NKPA units and was within the intent of General Collins' initial memorandum. However, personal prejudices such as those exhibited by MG Jenkins blinded the objective look at the Rangers under a different organization or command structure and their usefulness in other contingencies or theaters.

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APPENDIX

Appendix: Chief of Staff of the Army, General J. Lawton Collin's memorandum on marauder companies.

UNITED STATES ARMY  
THE CHIEF OF STAFF

CS 322 (29 Aug 50)

29 August 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE A. C. OF S., G-3, Operations:

SUBJECT: Organization of marauder companies

1. One of the major lessons to be learned from the Korean fighting appears to be the fact that the North Koreans have made very successful use of small groups, trained, armed and equipped for the specific purpose of infiltrating our lines and attacking command posts and artillery positions. During the latter stages of the war with Germany, the Germans developed similar units. The results obtained from such units warrant specific action to develop such units in the American Army.

2. Please take the necessary steps to have instructions issued to establish experimental "marauder" companies along the following general lines:

a. Initially there should be one such company per infantry division. Experience in training, and possibly in action in Korea, may indicate advisability of organizing one company per infantry regiment.

b. The mission of these units should be to infiltrate through enemy lines and attack command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communications centers or facilities.

c. The company should be organized with 3 platoons of 3 10-man squads each.

d. These men should all be volunteers with high intelligence ratings.

e. They should be paid 20% extra for this service.

f. All men in each squad should be trained to handle demolitions.

g. Each soldier should be equipped with a light automatic rifle. Each squad should have either a single 60-mm mortar or a bazooka. Each man should carry two rounds on his person for these weapons in addition to his automatic rifle ammunition, and certain demolitions equipment.

h. Deleted..

i. The total strength of the company should not exceed 100 men. The administrative and supply echelons should be kept to the absolute minimum. Each man should be prepared to cook his own food in the field and carry only a light shelter half or light sleeping bag on his back.

3. My idea is that we should establish at once a training section at The Infantry School to initiate the formation of these units to test their organization, equipment and tactics.

4. An outstanding young brigadier general or colonel ought to be placed in charge of this project. It should be pushed very promptly and vigorously, so as to test one or more of these companies in action in Korea if possible.

J. Lawton Collins

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